

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA:
A POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE EVENTS WHICH
PRECIPITATED THE CHANGE FROM NON-VIOLENCE TO VIOLENCE
AS A MEANS OF STRUGGLE AGAINST THE APARTHEID STATE,
1913-1963

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

South Africa has become the dominating political topic of the 1970's. Although apartheid has been the legal framework on which the South African government has based its political, social, and economic institutions since 1948, and has been a de facto way of life since the 1600's, it is only today that widespread recognition of the contradictions that exist within South African society has emerged to become an international concern. There exists the inherent controversy in a dilemma such as the one in South Africa (where a powerful minority controls all the resources in the country and is reluctant to hand over the privileges connected with this power) as to the means by which the oppressed must struggle to achieve liberation. Government circles, mindful of capitalism's enormous investment in South Africa's economic sector, strenuously advocate negotiation as the means for transferring political power from the hands of the Afrikaaner to the African. The upper echelons of the U.S. and its allies are being pressured by the multinationals to preserve the economic order of the country at the cost of the African struggle itself. The African knows that the only means by which South Africa will be returned to him is by the use of violence as a weapon of struggle against the apartheid state. This knowledge has evolved as a result of experiencing the futility of non-violent resistance in various movements throughout South Africa's history of oppression and exploitation. Non-violent resistance, based on Christian ethics and the realization of the power contained within the state's military apparatus, was believed to both appeal to the white man's sense of morality and also protect the African from repercussions resulting from resistance. This

notion, although perhaps unconsciously realized at the onset of government response to non-violence with violence, finally culminated during the massacre at Sharpeville into a new philosophy of resistance recognizing the inevitability of violence as the only means by which change can occur- a change entailing no less than the radical redistribution of power and wealth. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the political history of the African National Congress of South Africa from the time of its inception in 1913 as an elitist reform movement advocating participation for Africans within the existing system by constitutional change into a movement recognizing the utilization of violence as the only means by which radical transformation of the South African state can occur. Emphasis will be placed on the failure of the various non-violent campaigns conducted by the ANC during the 1950's and the failure of passive resistance as a means of struggle against the massive state apparatus of the government. Although the ANC has continued to be a viable tool of resistance throughout the 1960's and 1970's, this political history will end with the disbandment of Umkonto we Sizwe in 1963. Umkonto will not be examined as a separate political movement, but rather as the military arm of the ANC-power, and emphasis will be placed on Umkonto's justification for turning to violence, rather than the dynamics of the movement as a whole.

The Background

On April 7, 1662 the first Dutch colonists, under Jan van Riebeeck, were established at Table Bay to "provide that the East Indian ships... may procure...herbs, flesh, water, and other needful refreshments."¹

¹Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol. I (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969) p. 187

By 1682, 700 Europeans were living in the settlement, producing wine and wheat for export, as well as revictualling the ships.² The Dutch settlers were joined before the end of the seventeenth century by Huguenots, fleeing religious persecution in France.³

It appears to be chauvinistic to begin summarizing South African history with the coming of the white man. Yet, the nature of the problem being explored here begins with confrontation between the colonial settler and the indigenous African. It is important to understand that the Afrikaner have had over three hundred years to build the necessary state apparatus needed to control a population nearly four times their own.

Serious British occupation began in 1806, but did not really develop until the latter part of the nineteenth century with the discovery of diamonds and gold. The Dutch-style pastoral life, which also depended to a great extent on African labor, ceased to be the mainstay of the economy. Massive investments were made in the mining companies that extracted the precious minerals from the sub-soil, employing black workers under conditions of intense exploitation.⁴

South Africa is wealthy; it is the richest, most economically developed country on the continent. It possesses vast economic resources: the most important of these remains the underpaid African worker, whose labor provides the ruling European minority with the highest per capita income in Africa and one of the highest in the World. Against this, it has been estimated that the cash earnings of an African worker in the gold mines were no higher in real terms in 1966 than in 1911.⁵

²C.R. Boxer, The Portugese Seaborn Empire (London:Hutchinson, 1968) pp.106-127

³Richard Gibson, Contemporary Struggles Against White Minority Rule (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) p. 19

⁴Ibid, p. 20

⁵Brian Bunting, The Rise of the South African Reich (Harmondsworth:Penguin Press, 1969) p. 513

The wages of Africans in industry are somewhat higher, but they hardly share in South Africa's economic prosperity.⁶

Only thirteen per cent of South Africa's 472,347 square miles has been allocated by the white minority-regime to Africans, who comprise nearly seventy per cent of the population. The so-called Bantu areas are impoverished rural ghettos. Within these areas, there are no industries and no major towns and cities. Communications are poor, despite the high density of population in the north and south east. African agriculture is mostly subsistence farming to maize and sorghum on poor, eroded soils.⁷

Land, or lack of it, has been an extremely important factor in the resistance movement of South Africa. The ANC was initially formed to protest the first of South Africa's Land Acts and many subsequent campaigns were aimed at promoting the redistribution of land with more favorable results from the African. Two-thirds of all Africans still live in white areas where they may be evicted at any time. Most of the people who live in white areas work within the city or in the mines.

In the large cities, Africans have to live in ghetto-like areas called "townships", which are physically separated from the rest of the city. Men who come to the cities seeking employment are not allowed to bring their wives or children with them. As a result, they move constantly between the cities and the rural areas. Sometimes they work for a year or more before returning home for a short time.⁸

By depriving Africans of the right to settle in one place and the right to own property, the government creates a vast pool of migratory labor that can easily be channeled to satisfy the needs of the South

⁶Gibson, op. cit., p. 20

⁷Ibid

⁸African Research Group, Race to Power. (New York: Anchor Press, 1974) p. 10

African economy. The system of migratory labor destroys family life. It forces them to live as isolated individuals in a permanent state of uncertainty. Traditional ways of life and culture are destroyed in the urbanization process, at the same time prohibiting the African from participating in the dominate white culture.⁹

Black South Africans have never submitted willingly to white rule. As the Europeans gradually expanded away from the coast into the interior by taking over their land, and after burning scores of villages, Blacks mounted fierce resistance against the intruders to maintain control of the land.

The advance of first the Dutch and then the British into the interior of the country precipitated almost continuous fighting. Africans' determination to keep control of their land and their people presented the colonist with nine full-scale wars between the years 1779 and 1879. Even without guns, different groups of Blacks routed the invaders and in some cases made them respect African territorial rights until the nineteenth century.¹⁰

When the Boers began their Great Trek away from the Cape, they were turned back from Natal in the east after being severely defeated by the Zulu nation. They were forced north by successive defeats at the hands of King Mshoeshoe in the area of Lesotho and King Sekhukuni in what is now Transvaal. The Boers were able to defeat the Africans only with the military help of the British. The British, even with their phenomenally superior weaponry, had to rely on playing rival ethnic groups off

⁹Ibid, pp. 7-11

¹⁰Ibid, p. 30

against each other to finally establish military control over the Africans.¹¹

African armed resistance lasted for more than two hundred years, ending with the defeat of the Bambata rebellion of 1906. Led by Bambata, a Zulu Chief, Africans rose in arms against the expropriation of Zulu lands and onerous taxes in Natal. Bambata died in battle along with some other 4,000 Africans. Only 25 whites were killed. The crushing military superiority of the European was demonstrated again in the shedding of African blood.¹²

Thus began an era of passive non-violent resistance, an era which was to last for over half a century. The movement most characterized by fighting a non-violent struggle against the apartheid state was the African National Congress of South Africa.

¹¹Ibid

¹²Ibid

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ANC AND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The South African Native National Congress, later to be known as the African National Congress, was founded in 1913 as the direct result of a conference organized by Pixley K. Seme "to devise ways and means of forming a national union for the purpose of creating national unity and defending the African's rights and privileges."¹³ Seme, regarded as the founder of the ANC, was educated at Columbia University and Jesus College, Oxford, where he obtained his law degree. On his return to South Africa, Seme was struck full in the face by the humiliation to which Africans were subjected, and he was appalled. Africans were forbidden to walk on the pavement and were compelled to take off their hat when a white man passed by. Africans could only travel fourth class on the trains in a sort of cattletruck. White politicians openly admitted that taxes were imposed on Africans to make them work. Policemen repeatedly demanded proof of tax receipts and passes, arresting those having none in their possession. The African had no voice in the government; in the court, he was hardly heard, seldom believed.¹⁴ Confronted with these inequities, Seme contacted three other Africans of the Black elite; Alfred Mangena, the first Black barrister in South Africa; Richard Msimang, son of the founder of the Independent African Methodist Church, and educated in law at Tauton, Somerset; and George Dixon Montsioa, a descendant of the Baralong Paramount Chief in Mafeking, who was practicing law at Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal. They decided that the first

¹³Peter Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa. (Berkeley: University of Cal. Press, 1972) p. 34

¹⁴Mary Benson, The African Patriots (Chicago:Encyclopedia Britannica Press, 1964) p. 26

step towards resistance was to call a conference of all African leaders and chiefs. On January 8, the conference began. Some called for a resolution to "unite together and form a federation of one Pan-Africanist Association."¹⁵ The goals of the proposed organization were to:

- (1) unite all the various tribes of South Africa.
- (2) educate public opinion on the aspirations of the Black man of South Africa.
- (3) be the mouthpiece of the African people and their chiefs.
- (4) advocate on behalf of the African masses for equal rights and justice.
- (5) represent them in the Union Parliament, and generally to do all such things that are necessary for the progress and welfare of the African people.

Thus began the African National Congress.

The ANC can easily claim to be one of Africa's oldest formally organized and recognized resistance movements. Founded in 1913, it predates even the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the United States, which it greatly resembled during most of its legal existence in South Africa. Indeed, like the NAACP, the ANC had its roots in the Christian church and was an elite-led organization which strived towards achieving full citizenship through constitutional means in the courts.

Christianity was an extremely important element in the formation and operation of the ANC movement:

"Christian ethics had therefore but one clear social implication in the minds of politically-conscious Africans. The churches were expected to be the vanguard of public opinion leading society away from racial discrimination to a color-blind equality of opportunity." 16

¹⁵Ibid, pp. 25-29

¹⁶Walshe, op. cit., p. 43

The leadership of the ANC was said to be the result of a "missionary education, the impact of Christian values, the beginning of urbanization, and the influence of British, Black American and Liberal ideas."¹⁷ This element of Christianity in the ANC, along with the other aforementioned influences, tended to "embourgeoisify" the movement, leading more towards goals of participation in the existing system rather than towards the full transformation of society. Edward Feit, in his analysis of the ANC, regarded the role of the Christian bourgeoisie in the movement as one that came about "by force of circumstances rather than through personal choice," and that their entry in the political arena "was perhaps less due to their own wish to participate in racial politics than to the feeling that, being forced to the same level of the masses by external constraints, he must break the system in order to establish his supremacy over them."¹⁸ Bloke Modisane, himself a prominent member of the ANC, confirms Feit's assertion:

"And because the Africaaners were such unintelligent oppressors, they disturbed the perfect tranquility of the African middle-class, mingled them with the commonality; the old guard, masters of consultations and concessions and compromise, found themselves without a protector, co-mingled with the common dust; then out of expedience, rather than loyalty, they looked for recognition in that instrument of rebellion, the African National Congress."¹⁹

Yet, in all resistance movements, it is precisely from within the indigenous petty-bourgeoisie, a social class which grows from colonialism, "that arise the first important steps towards mobilizing and organizing the masses for the struggle against colonial powers."²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 160

¹⁸ Edward Feit, African Opposition in South Africa: The Failure of Passive Resistance (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967) pp. 26-31

¹⁹ Bloke Modisane, Blame Me On History (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963) p. 46

²⁰ Amilcar Cabral, Return to the Source. (New York: Africa Information Service, 1973) p. 69

To label the ANC as a "liberation" movement would clearly be an abuse of the generally accepted definition of liberation. At the time of its emergence, and through most of its activity up until 1960, the ANC was essentially a "reformist, elite-led association for the betterment of African economic, social and political conditions within a non-violent, legal framework."²¹ The professionals, most of them either lawyers or ministers, who ran the organization regarded it as their primary task to speak for the people rather than to the people. The African National Congress did not think of overthrowing the political system as a whole; the nationalist leadership was essentially reformist; the nature of the African struggle was not perceived to be a protracted one. Clearly, the ANC was a protest organization composed of African petty-bourgeoisie whose solution to settler colonialism lay within a neo-colonialist framework of merely adding the African bourgeoisie on the rolls of the state apparatus of South Africa's modern industrial economy.

The history of the ANC as a whole can be examined by the division of six separate periods, the distinct attitudes characterizing each ideological and tactical phase.²² The first period, from 1913 to 1936, was the heyday of the belief that white liberalism would eventually and inevitably emerge to reduce discrimination against Africans. The second period, from 1936 to 1949, was marked by the failure of con-

²¹Gibson, op. cit., p. 38

²²Thomas Karis divides the history of the ANC into five periods: To these five periods I have added a sixth- the emergence of Nelson Mandela's Umkonto we Sizwe as the military arm of the illegal ANC movement and its adoption of violent tactics as a means of struggle. Thomas Karis, "South Africa" in Five African States, Gwendolyn Carter, ed. (Cornell University Press, 1963) pp. 486-487

sultative bodies set up by the government, such as the Natives Representative Council (NRC), whose advice the South African government seldom heeded. It was during this period that the Youth League was founded (1943), and that the alliance with the South African Indian Congress was forged (1946). The third period (1949-1953) was characterized by an attempt to develop a mass movement and to mobilize the majority of Africans; it was also a time of growing militancy and of more strenuous efforts to build strong alliances with other ethnic groups in the Country. In this period, passive resistance was adopted as a means of struggle. The fourth period lasted from 1953 to 1956. In this period, the Congress Alliance was cemented, an alliance of African, Coloured, Indian and White Congresses, and a series of campaigns was conducted. The following period from 1957 to 1960 was that which conducted a number of stay-at-home strikes in an effort to bring economic pressure on the white community.²³ To these five periods is added a sixth period which is not yet ended, that of illegal resistance following the ban of the ANC by the South African government in 1960. This new era was marked most notably by the formation of Umkonto we Sizwe and the adoption of violence as a means of struggle. Let us now examine the periods of development in ANC history more explicitly in order to understand clearly the trends in ideology and tactics throughout its existence as a resistance movement.²⁴

"During the years before 1936, many African leaders continued to hope that cooperation with liberally inclined whites would bring about a reduction in racial discrimination and a progressive share in political power."²⁵ The ANC was formed under this assumption in order to promote

²³Feit, op. cit., pp. 34-36

²⁴This section is based on Karis' analysis.

²⁵Karis, op. cit., p. 489

a sense of national identity and provide the government with a representative body to deal with. Leadership, as mentioned previously, remained in the hands of professionals and church leaders whose nationalism was coupled with respect for tribal authority. Indeed a council of tribal chiefs was an integral part of the Congress machinery in the earlier years of the ANC.

The second period, from 1936 to 1949, was marked by the failure of the Natives Representatives Council, and the coming of age of a new and militant urban generation. Dr. A.B. Xuma led an administration which concentrated on building an economically well-established movement that could act independently of whites and Indians. "African Claims", which called for the "abandonment of any policy and all practices that discriminate against the Africans in any way whatsoever,"²⁶ were expressed in manifestos, boycotts, and strikes. The ANC Youth League, established in 1943, adopted a Program of Action calling for an end to cooperation with government institutions and for boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience to be increased as major strategems of resistance.

During the third period, from 1949 to 1952, the ANC moved towards closer multi-racial cooperation, and waged a "defiance" campaign against unjust laws, employing the methods of passive resistance. Leaders of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) cooperated in organizing a one day strike on May Day, 1950, which resulted in the killing of eighteen people and the wounding of thirty. Joint planning for mass action continued, and on June 26, 1952, the Defiance Campaign began. The campaign consisted of a series of public protests against

²⁶Gwendolyn M. Carter, The Politics of Inequality: South Africa Since 1948. (New York: Praeger Press, 1958) p. 484

the apartheid state. "Throughout the remainder of the year African men and women, often manifesting a religious fervor, sought arrest by sitting on park benches marked "Europeans Only." They paraded through the train station entrances similarly marked and marched through the streets shouting 'Mayibuye Afrika' (Come back Africa)."²⁷ In five months, more than eight thousand Africans went to jail.

The fourth period, 1953-1956, began with the passing of the Criminal Amendment Act by the South African government which increased the personal risk to be run in any future campaign of protest. In 1955, the ANC, the SAIC, the newly organized Congress of Democrats (COD), and the Coloured Peoples Organization (COP) formed a multi-racial front in the Congress of the People. Nearly three thousand people authorized a Freedom Charter which demanded equal rights and opportunities for all. African leaders were divided during this period by the question of whether or not to collaborate with radical whites. This particular issue, cooperation with the so-called Communists of South Africa, was a constant source of friction during the history of the ANC, and would not be resolved until 1959.

During the fifth period from 1957 to 1960 and the Sharpeville massacre, African leaders urged greater militancy, racial assertiveness, and identification with Pan-Africanism. The readiness of Africans who share an economic grievance to cooperate "effectively and almost spontaneously"²⁸ in local protest was evident in the successful boycott of Johannesburg buses for three months in 1957. In April, 1959, African

²⁷Jim Hogan, South Africa: Civilizations in Conflict. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972) p. 62

²⁸Karis, op. cit., p. 493

nationalists who opposed alliances with "Communist-oriented" organizations established the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC).

On March 21, 1960, at Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, the fifth period ended and a new era for the ANC began. On that day, the white South African police killed sixty-nine Africans and wounded around one hundred and eighty-six in a crowd that was demonstrating its support for a new defiance campaign aimed against the carrying of passes.²⁹ Following the Sharpeville massacre, both the ANC and the PAC were banned by the South African government. The non-violent phase of the resistance movement had ended, and the sixth period, that of underground resistance had begun. Umkonto we Sizwe- Spear of the Nation- was formed based on the belief that: 1) as a result of the government policy, violence by the African people had become inevitable, and unless responsible leadership was given to channelize and control the feelings of the people, there would be outbreaks of terrorism which would produce an intensity of bitterness and hostility between the races which is not produced even by war; and 2) without violence there would be no way open to the African people to succeed in their struggle against the principles of white supremacy.³⁰ This era saw the demise of the Dube, Xuma and Luthuli, and the birth of the Mandela.

This political history of the ANC will end in the year 1963 with the Rivonia Trial and the subsequent disbandment of Umkonto. To this day, the ANC has been actively involved in the resistance struggle in South Africa, and the years of the sixties and seventies have seen the ANC grow and develop into a viable tool of struggle against the apart-

²⁹Carter, op. cit., p. 292

³⁰Nelson Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom. (London:Heinemann, 1965) p. 168

heid state. However, since the thesis of this paper is concerned with the events leading up to the ANC's turn to violence, it is only with more pertinent dynamics of Umkonto's justification as a movement advocating violence that will be dealt with, therefore, stopping at its disbandment. The following section included in the overview of the ANC will examine the organizational structure of the ANC and the type of leadership within the movement.

Organizational Structure

Congresses in African settings, according to Thomas Hodgekin, are characterized by looseness of structure, "taking on the form, often, of local functional associations, grouped around a central junta which has entire control over policy."³¹ This statement characterizes the organizational structure of the African National Congress.³²

The base of the ANC was to be the branches, each consisting of not more than twenty members; each member had to be more than seventeen years of age and ascribe to ANC policy. Once properly constituted, each branch was to hold a general meeting at which its officers and not less than two committee members were to be elected. The branches had two separate channels through which they would communicate with the national and provincial bodies. They could send one delegate to the National Congress and one to the Provincial Congress for every twenty members, up to a maximum of ten members per delegation.

Each Provincial Congress was the highest organ in the four provinces of South Africa, and the National Congress was the supreme policy-maker

³¹Thomas Hodgekin, African Political Parties. (Baltimore: Penguin Press, 1961)

³²Based on the constitution of 1940. ANC was reorganized in 1960 under Mandela's M-Plan.

of all. Both conferences were to meet annually and be governed by similar rules. The Provincial Congress was responsible for ANC affairs in each province and the National Congress for over-all policy for the entire country. But as both large bodies were too unwieldy and their meetings too infrequent for the regular conduct of affairs, a National Executive Committee (NEC) and a Working Committee were set up to conduct ANC affairs on a more regular basis. The committees were entrusted with general supervision and control. It was with them, rather than with the cumbersome conferences, that real decision-making rested.

The National Executive Committee was, as its name implies, the nerve center of the ANC movement. Among its members were the National President, a National Secretary and a National Treasurer. In addition, it was to consist of fifteen other members all directly elected at the National Conference. The NEC was to meet at least once every six months and at such other times as was convened by the Working Committee. The NEC was to submit a report to the annual conference of the work accomplished during the year. The report was to embrace such matters as activities, organization, finances and the stand of leadership on national and international events.

Important as the NEC was, the most important decision center was doubtless the Working Committee. Through its small size and the proximity of its members to each other (members were required to reside within fifty members of Johannesburg), the Working Committee actually became more powerful than the NEC. To perform these functions, the Working Committee was to meet every month and to place before the NEC a report of the work, organization and finances of the ANC. The Working Committee was composed of elected members from the National Congress and had

full executive powers to carry into effect the decisions of both the National Conference and the NEC.³³

It is important to understand the dynamics of an organization's formal structure in order that an understanding of the nature of the organization itself be revealed. Let us consider the bureaucratic nature of the ANC. Edward Feit, in his analysis of the ANC, suggests that a manifestation of a large bureaucracy characterized by real little control over the concrete actions of an organization is the result of the leadership's desire for protection of their own status in the movement. He maintains that the problem of control is intensified by the need for a resistance organization to produce results. In order to gain a following, a movement has to make many promises: and these promises must soon be realized. If the leadership fails to achieve the results promised, its status is opened to challenge. Campaigns launched with fanfare must at least partially achieve their objectives. Where a government meets challenge with success and threatens political action with counter actions, the resistance leadership is deserted or displaced. Even if the leaders and their cadres survive, and these will shrink with failure, the support group will become harder and harder to mobilize with each successive campaign. Failure and faction feed on each other in any movement for change. The more often the movement fails, the less likely it is to succeed in the future unless it happens to be extremely fortunate. The insurgent leaders under pressure will seek to retain control by imposing a bureaucratic pattern on the organization for the protection of their own status being rationalized as protection of the movement itself.

³³Feit, op. cit., pp. 53-58

Perhaps the nature of this bureaucratic structure of the ANC can explain its failure to operate as a mass movement advocating change. Bureaucratic structures, being founded on predictable actions, are unsuited for producing continuously unpredictable actions- the foundations of successful insurgency. Bureaucratic organizations tend to concentrate on readily achievable goals, on what does not require much innovation, and on what can be reduced to routine. The ranked structures are, what is more, relatively easy to penetrate.³⁴

The organization of a movement on the foundations of a rigid bureaucratic structure has its roots in the nature of the leadership itself. Most African leaders were drawn from the educated bourgeoisie and have their base either in religion or law. Clearly, during the ANC's early development, the leaders remained remote from the masses and their needs. Leo Kuper notes that leadership "often became absorbed in ideological issues remote from the interests of the workers."³⁵ Thus, both the structure and the leadership of the ANC were distinct entities which kept their distance from the African masses and, consequently, failed them by choosing not to mobilize the vast majority into a viable force of power.

Throughout this examination of the ANC in its rather broad perspective, it is quite clear that violence was adopted as a means of struggle only after every other tactical means of struggle had been exhausted. The ANC was formed in 1913 to defend the rights of the African people against the oppressive legislation of the South African

³⁴Edward Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960-1964 (Evanston:Northwestern University Press, 1971) p. 307

³⁵Leo Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie: Race, Class and Politics in South Africa (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1965) p. 21

government, namely the South Africa Act and the Native Land Act, and adhered strictly to a constitutional struggle. For thirty-seven years, until 1949, this tactic was the only means by which the ANC attempted to resist the racist policy of the government. Even after 1949, the ANC remained determined to avoid violence. At this time, however, there was a change from constitutional means of protest which had been exclusively employed during these thirty-seven years. The change was embodied in a decision which was taken to protest apartheid legislation by peaceful, but unlawful, demonstrations against certain apartheid laws. The stay-at-home strikes, resistance tactics used in the late fifties and early sixties, in accordance with ANC policy, were to be peaceful demonstrations. Careful instructions were given to organizers and members to avoid any recourse to violence. The government's answer was to introduce new and harsher laws, to mobilize its armed forces, and to send armed vehicles and soldiers into townships in a massive show of force designed to intimidate the people. This was clearly an indication that the government had decided to rule by force alone, and this decision was a milestone on the road to Umkonto. Mandela cites seven specific acts of government violence, from the years 1957 to 1961, to point clearly that each disturbance led to the inevitable growth among Africans in the belief that violence was the only way out- it shows that a government which uses force to maintain rule teaches the oppressed to use force against it.³⁶ It is also clear that the ANC has continually waged an intense struggle within its ranks as to the nature of the struggle itself and the means by which this struggle could be most effectively carried out with a minimum amount of African casualties. The ANC began as a reformist

³⁶Mandela, op. cit., pp. 167-170

movement heavily influenced by a missionary-educated, European-oriented, African bourgeoisie. This elitist core of the ANC movement imposed a rigid bureaucratic structure upon the organization which hindered any type of spontaneous insurgency which has characterized more revolutionary movements advocating change. The leadership, during its period of constitutional struggle, defined its position as that of speaking for the people rather than to the people. The 1940's gave birth to a more militant urban generation which saw the inherent contradictions in waging a struggle apart from the masses, and attempted to utilize the power of African labor in a series of campaigns designed to cripple the white South African economy. The Youth League represented this militant faction and proved to be a viable source of power within the movement as can be seen by their ousting of Dr. John S. Moroka, a representative of the bourgeois leadership. The struggle became defined in more militant terms, yet there existed still a sharp division between those members viewing the struggle as one composed of a multi-racial worker's front and those viewing it as a struggle between the African and the white man. This conflict became externally resolved with the formation of the Pan-Africanist Congress in 1959. A third internal conflict can be seen by the emergence of Umkonto we Sizwe as the military arm of the ANC coupled with Luthuli's adamant stand on the principles on non-violent resistance. By this time, however, the pacifist segment of the ANC was not powerful enough to cause any real dissention within the ranks. It is therefore quite evident that the ANC has historically been troubled by internal conflict which quite often led to a disunity within the movement which perhaps hindered the resistance movement as a whole.

Violence, as a means of achieving an end, is an extremely difficult action to justify. However, as this examination of the political history

of the ANC attempts to show, violence has become the only means by which the South African people can ever hope to achieve liberation from the settler colonialism imposed upon them by the European since the early 17th century. The government has repeatedly shown its disregard for any peaceful protest by the African. Words must be backed up by guns.

CHAPTER III

CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE AND THE MOVE TOWARDS PASSIVE RESISTANCE, 1913-1949

The most pressing problem facing the African National Congress at the time of its inception was the prospect of land segregation. Scarcely had the delegates gathered for the first annual conference in March 1913 when momentous issues involving both ideology and immediate policy were raised by the Natives Land Act.

The Act, pressured by the interests of the mining industry and white farmers, established 'possessory segregation', "the old frontier policy of complete racial territorial separation."³⁷ was clearly impossible due to the nature of South Africa's rapidly developing economy. The alternative adopted consequently involved separate Native and European homelands while permitting the residence of individuals in each others areas. Supposedly a temporary measure to maintain the status quo pending the report of a land commission, the Act was retained until Hertzog's Native Trust Land Act of 1936. It allocated land as follows:

	<u>Total Area (in morgen*)</u>	<u>Native Reserves</u>	<u>%</u>
Cape	83,700,000	6,217,037	7.5
Transvaal	33,400,000	1,159,296	3.5
Natal	10,650,000	2,972,312	29.7
OFS**	14,800,000	74,290	0.5
Total	<u>142,550,000</u>	<u>10,422,935</u>	<u>7.3</u>

*A morgen is a unit of land measurement, equal to a little over two acres.

**Orange Free State.

³⁷Walsh, op. cit., p. 43

In addition to the establishment of possessory segregation, the Act checked squatting by forbidding the movement of Africans from farm to farm and requiring those who chose to remain on white property to work ninety days per annum for the privilege. Sharecropping was terminated and individuals offered the choice of returning to over-crowded reserves, working as laborers for a particular farmer or seeking employment in the mines and in the cities.³⁸

This step was the first move by the South African government in its eventual formation of the apartheid state. Its purpose was to make it exceedingly difficult for Africans and other non-whites to become economically independent. The government engineered such drastic changes in the African's condition that he was compelled to work for the white capitalist. Once employed, the African was then subject to complete control of wages, conditions of work, place of employment, and so on; non-whites had no power and were given few rights to influence the terms of their employment. The Land Act provided South Africa with a mass supply of cheap labor and the means to control it.

The ANC was able to "take advantage of this ferment to consolidate its support amongst the chiefs, the new elite and many less educated individuals, so entrenching its position as the recognized vehicle for protest."³⁹ The immediate response of the ANC was to reject a move towards segregation in favor of freedom within the multi-racial context, that is, equality of opportunity based on decreasing rather than increasing racial discrimination. Dube, President-General of the ANC, decided to air his grievances to the British Crown rather than deal with South Africa directly. Hope for equality of opportunity in terms

³⁸Ibid, p. 44

³⁹Ibid, p. 46

of what was thought of as the British policy of non-racialism was evident in the ANC's persistence in appealing to Great Britain for protection. The ANC attributed the Africans' willingness to submit loyally and cheerfully after military defeat to a belief that the full benefits of British rule would be impartially applied to all British subjects. The Land Act ran counter to this, being based on principles of segregation, and the ANC looked to the British for an appeal.

To clarify attitudes during this period, it is essential to recognize that the term segregation had several meanings. There were many variants, and rural land segregation was not seen to be incompatible with the ANC's demands of direct representation in Parliament or maintenance of the Cape common roll. To the ANC, reacting in the first months of antipathy of this specific piece of legislation, segregation meant land segregation only, and more specifically rural land segregation. In this they were ultimately prepared to acquiesce, provided that the actual division of land was not characterised by the quite unacceptable allocation of the Land Act of 1913, and provided that racial discrimination was not to be applied as the basic principle underlying all Native policy in rural, urban, economic and political matters. In short, rural land segregation safeguarding and extending the tribal areas was not seen as an obstacle to equal opportunity for educated Africans in the wider South Africa.⁴⁰

In 1914, after the Act was made law in the South African Parliament, a delegation of ANC officials traveled to London to appeal to British justice. The delegation made it clear that their mission was one to address the King rather than the British Government and to refrain from

⁴⁰Ibid, pp. 47-49

public agitation in Britain. After being rebuffed by the Colonial Secretary, however, the ANC withdrew its restraint on public agitation and demanded that the Land Act be put to a vote during the Colonial Office vote in the Commons. Harcourt, the Colonial Secretary, referred his questioners to Sir Syndey Langden's 1903-1905 Commission and insisted that the Act concerned only the Government and the Parliament of South Africa. After this there was no further tactic save the forlorn hope of a campaign to educate public opinion. This last hope was interrupted by the War, and the delegates returned home.

World War I broke out in Europe and the African National Congress responded in somewhat the same way as blacks in the United States. The War was seen as a type of proving ground where blacks could illustrate their loyalty to the state in exchange for full citizenship and its accompanying benefits. Public criticism of the government was to be suspended and Africans were called upon again to demonstrate their loyalty to the King and the Empire. A delegation was dispatched to Pretoria to assure the authorities of African support at a time of international crisis, and to offer to raise 5,000 troops to German South West Africa on the condition that they would be fully equipped.

The government's response was that which would greatly resemble their response to the arming of African troops twenty years later during World War II. Smuts, Minister of Defense, explained that there was no desire to make use of the services, in a combat capacity, of citizens not of European descent; the conflict had its origins amongst the white people of Europe, and the government was anxious to avoid the employment of its Native citizens in warfare against whites.⁴¹ Although this official action was seen yet as another denial of common South African citizenship, the ANC

⁴¹Ibid, pp. 48-54

nonetheless supported a national relief fund for the war effort. It was also agreed to set up a consultative committee to assist the Department of Native Affairs in recruiting 24,000 Africans as a labor force for the South West Africa campaign.

The African's reward for his loyalty and cooperation with the South African government during these crucial years of international war, a most ripe time for revolt, was the passage of the Native Administration Bill of 1917. This Bill was designed to separate African administration and legislation from the European affairs of the House of Assembly. It was also to establish the basis for a uniform Native policy throughout South Africa.

The Bill proposed to set up Native and non-Native areas in a rigid application of possessory segregation. The Governor-General was to legislate by proclamation for the Native areas and was to be advised by a permanent commission with the Minister of Native Affairs as Chairman. Native councils were to be gradually introduced into the reserves with the intention of giving Africans a voice in their own affairs and enabling them to interest themselves "in their own evolution."⁴² Individual tenure was also to be encouraged, villages consolidated and communities created in which professionally qualified Africans would find opportunities to serve the African people. As for the non-Native areas, eight classes of Africans were to be permitted to reside, but only insofar as they served the white interests.

The Bill was a direct manifestation of the upcoming official policy of apartheid, or separate development. It was a means of maintaining white privilege and supremacy in all fields within the non-Native areas, a means

⁴² Edward Roux, Time Longer Than Rope. (University of Wisconsin Press, 1972) p. 288

of using unskilled and semi-skilled African labor for European economic development, and ensured a steady stream of African labor for the 'white' economy.

The African National Congress believed that a delegation protesting again the Land Act and also the Native Administration Act at a time of peace negotiations in Europe would produce a more flexible reaction from the Imperial Government. As in 1914 there was no alternative outlet for constructive influence in South Africa, and the belief persisted that the earlier delegation had been prematurely cut off by the outbreak of war from making a deeper impression on the British public. A delegation was again sent to England, and it met with the same failure as the delegation in 1914. The British staunchly defended the South African government and the laws enacted therein.

Looking back at the delegation and seeking to place it in a wider perspective, this final visit to Britain appears as a major watershed in the history of the ANC. It was the last serious attempt to obtain British intervention in South African affairs and it brought to a close the early period of activity when, in the first flush of its formation and stimulated by the Land Act and Native Administrative Bill, the ANC had immediately become the widely accepted channel for African political protest. After the failure of this desperate gesture, the movement lost much of its coherence and initiative. The support of the chiefs ebbed away, membership stagnated and later declined, and the ANC began a long struggle through a quarter of a century of political frustration and organizational weakness that at times all overwhelmed it.

At its foundation, reacting against the South Africa Act and drawing upon the influences which had conditioned African political consciousness,

the ANC had been adamant on the ultimate goal of a non-racial policy for South Africa. With its involvement in its struggle against the Land Act this position had been modified, many ANC members revealing a preparedness born of desperation to accept rural land segregation and even to think in terms of segregation outlined by certain factions of the South African government. An adequate land allocation, according to population had been assumed to be the pre-requisite for any just form of segregation. In addition, a link between segregated political institutions and Parliament had always been a vague possibility. At no time, however, had there been approval of the Union's existing Native policy.

The Native Administration Bill of 1917 had consequently been rejected, and by 1919 this process of reaction against the negative example of racial discrimination had forced the ANC back to its original ideals of equality before the law for "civilized Africans", equality of opportunity in economic and political life and hence the share of the government of a united South Africa. A persisting ideological preference for the morality and political efficacy which the ANC attributed to principles of non-racialism as a means to the growth of wider loyalties and harmonious government among all the various peoples of South Africa, can be observed throughout the entire history of the African National Congress.⁴³

After seven years in which opposition to the Land Act absorbed its energies, the ANC had turned its attention to a wider range of socio-economic issues. Faced with progressive urbanization and a rising cost of living, the color bar, pass laws, a heavy burden of taxation and the need for improved education as a pre-requisite for individual progress in the developing economy, the ANC formulated attitudes on issues which

⁴³Walshe, op. cit., pp. 57-65

pointed with increasing clarity to the economic interdependence of the races. Quite apart from the problem of land, the very process of economic growth was coming to play an important part in forcing the ANC to develop its policies on matters which could not be solved on the basis of an "escapist belief that Africans would find scope for their advancement amidst the agricultural stagnation of the reserves."⁴⁴

Protests were channeled once more into constitutional paths and ideological commitments clarified in the discussion of new objects of legislation. The most obvious in reactions to the Natives Affairs Act of 1920 and the Urban Areas Act of 1923. The Native Affairs Act of 1920 had as its predecessor the Native Administrative Bill of 1917. It accepted the land allocation of 1917, and most notably set up a Native Affairs Commission, made up of Europeans, which was to advise the government and form a bridge with the African people. The Urban Areas Act of 1923 states that if in the opinion of the police any Native is 'an idle, dissolute or disorderly person' he may be brought before the Native Commissioner, who may order his deportation to his country home, on pain of imprisonment if he should return to the district from which he has been deported within a period of two years.⁴⁵ The Native Commissioner may refuse to have the defendant represented by a lawyer.

During the 1920's the ANC had attempted to establish a modus vivendi with the government and tried to achieve its aims through the limited constitutional means open to it. Their protests were aimed at transforming European opinion by the sheer strength of their moral assertions, by the justice of their case. Such a transformation would then

⁴⁴Ibid, p. 85

⁴⁵Roux, op. cit., p. 286

open the doors to equal opportunity, not to political assertion and African domination. Rather there would be a growing African contribution to South African society as morality and education triumphed- a reliance on moral claims which unhappily had little to do with the realities of political power.

Thus, we see the first period of ANC history marked by repeated attempts to voice grievances within the constitutional framework of the South African government. Appeals were made first to Great Britain and then to the South African Parliament itself, yet the protests were ignored and the oppressive legislation was increased. The basic themes in these years of impotence remained the cherished hope of equal opportunity in the economy and the gradual evolution of qualified and responsible individuals to full participation in the rights of citizenship. Participation within the existing structures of the wider community was the goal of the African National Congress. This era of strict adherence to a futile and limited means of constitutional struggle ended in 1936 with the passage of the Hertzog Bills, representing clearly and unequivocally the role of the African peoples in the apartheid state.

General Hertzog's Native Bills were first formulated in 1925 as a series of four bills. The Representation of Natives Bill aimed at abolishing the Cape Native vote completely, and by way of compensation a second Bill promised to the Natives of the whole Union a degree of representation by white senators. The third Bill took the form of an amendment to the Native Land Act of 1913 which set up a Committee to delimit certain land areas of the reserves. For various reasons, the additional land was not forthcoming. The fourth Bill, known as the Coloured Persons

Rights Bill, aimed at taking away the franchise from the Coloured people in the Cape and placing the Coloured voters on a separate roll. By the end of 1935, however, the bills were reduced to only two. The Bills in their new form proposed that no more Natives were to be allowed to register as voters in the Cape province. The 11,000 on the roll would be able to keep their vote until the Cape Native franchise would die of natural causes. All Africans would be allowed to elect by indirect means four white members of the Senate. In addition, the Bill proposed to establish a Native Representative Council. This council would have the right to pass opinions on proposed legislation affecting Africans, but the government would not be bound to conform to its decisions. The second Bill, embodying the 1913 Land Act, was called the Native Land and Trust Bill. It proposed to set up a board of trustees which would acquire for Africans, with monies voted from time to time by Parliament, some seven million morgen of land. When these were acquired, they would increase the existing Native Reserves by about fifty per cent, thus allowing Africans a total of about twelve per cent of the land in the country. It was understood that blacks would have to be content with this for the time being.⁴⁶

An All-African Conference was called in December of 1935 by Pixley Seme, founder of the ANC, and was attended by some five hundred persons, including representatives from Coloured, Indian and African Congresses. This convention was the broadest gathering of non-whites in South African history. Its purpose was to unite together in an effort to resist Hertzog's bills and provide the framework for a more unified front of South African blacks. The initial results of the meeting were far from spectacular. Repudiating a minority call for demonstrations and strikes, The All-African

⁴⁶Ibid, pp. 286-288

Convention decided to plead with the government for a limited African franchise and improvement of the situation of non-whites in general. In addition, an appeal was sent on behalf of the African people to London, to the King and the British Parliament.

Hertzog turned to the All-African Convention urging African acceptance of his Natives Representative Council. Many leaders of the Convention favored acceptance and a number of ANC members were elected to the Council. The Council survived for many years until its abolition by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951.⁴⁷ The All-African Conference can be looked upon as a sincere attempt at unity among the multi-racial Congresses of South Africa; however, no discernible optimistic results concerning any type of significant change in the situation of non-whites in South Africa was an obvious result of this Convention. Rather it set the tone for future alliances between the various resistance movements representing South Africa's Indians, Coloureds and Africans.

The first expansion of the ANC came in 1940 with the election of Alfred Bitini Xuma to the presidency of the organization. It was Dr. Xuma who took the initiative during the early 1940's in developing the logic of equal opportunity to the point of recognizing its full implication- the eventual emergence of an African majority as the predominant political power in South Africa. He also set out to reorganize Congress with the intent to establish a mass movement. A non-racial ethic remained the central characteristic of the ANC's ideology as it evolved in the 1940's. Mounting frustrations, Xuma's determined leadership and the influence of the Youth League had, however, resulted in the application of the non-racial principle with a new a ruthless logic; all racial discrimination was to be eradicated.

⁴⁷ Gibson, op. cit., pp. 42-44

Coupled with this insistence was the realization that the consequences involved political responsibility for the African majority, that is, the use of the African's political power for the reform of society.⁴⁸ Let us first examine the broader political scene in South Africa during these formative years of 1940-1949.

World War II was the dominant factor in South African politics during the early part of this period. Due to the precarious nature under which the South African government was functioning, a certain patronage was paid to African organizations in order to insure domestic tranquility during a period of international crisis. A Native Military Corps was established in 1940 and Denys Reitz, as Minister of Native Affairs, had been prepared to defend the arming of these troops in North Africa when and if circumstances demanded it. He had also been prepared to admit that Africans had major and legitimate grievances and quoted the Atlantic Charter to the NRC as a basis of reform. Smuts, too, had defended the arming of black troops and has also gone against bitter Nationalist Party opposition to arm every Coloured and African in the face of a Japanese invasion. Speaking on domestic matters, the Prime Minister recognized the permanence of African urbanization and admonished the white South Africans for neglecting their duty to the Africans, particularly in the matter of social welfare.⁴⁹

The 1942 Smut report on "Social Health and Economic Conditions of Urban Natives" recommended the administrative recognition of African trade unions as well as the abolition of the pass laws. A ministerial promise of impending trade union recognition was subsequently made and the enforcement of the pass laws was relaxed. Smut called publically for the eradication of the color bar. Europeans and Natives, he said were so inter-

⁴⁸Walshe, op. cit., pp. 418-419

⁴⁹Ibid, p. 420

dependent that the policy of segregation could never be carried out to its logical conclusion.⁵⁰

In spite of the government's relaxation of restrictive laws, pre-occupation with the war and maintaining peaceful relations at home, and the new government policy in general, the ANC did not (as they did not during World War I) take advantage of this weakening of the pre-apartheid state. On the contrary, the ANC was even more so convinced that there was some prospect of significant reform through the rigorous use of constitutional channels. What could have manifested itself into a full-scale resistance movement during a most crucial time of South African politics and the security of South Africa as a whole, remained to be merely the strengthening of the ANC's loyalty to the state. Small concessions were given to Africans in order to insure passivity in their relations with the South African government, and the ANC did not fail them. Doubtless to say, it was the African people who were failed.

This period of optimism was brought to an end in early 1943 by the impending general election. Smuts expressed great sympathy for the African cause, but spoke of tremendous "snags" in granting parliamentary representation to Africans. He also showed hesitation on the recognition of African trade unions.

While the ANC had experienced some initial encouragement as Xuma led it to a renewed formulation of policy, the climate in European politics had clearly changed in the course of 1943. It was consequently with some apprehension and a growing determination to pursue its ideals to their full logic that the ANC turned its attention to interpreting the Atlantic Charter, and its back on compromising with the structure of existing legislation.

⁵⁰Ibid, p. 421

The policy that had been developing under Xuma's presidency was brought to greater precision by the Atlantic Charter. By using the Charter to give added weight to its claims, the ANC hoped to elicit a positive response from the authorities and a clarification of official policy for the eagerly anticipated period of post-war reconstruction. Here was a document of international significance, a statement of the war aims of the Allies and preparatory step towards the United Nations. It was hoped that both the government and a majority of white South Africans would come to see its principles as the basis for an alternative policy to segregation.

"African Claims" became the basis policy statement upon which later ANC documents were essentially based. The first section, "The Atlantic Charter and the Africans"⁵¹ harked back to Smuts' acceptance of the Charter and went back through its eight points in an attempt to clarify their meaning and applicability to Africa. Under point one and "no aggrandisement," specific reference was made to Ethiopia's right to full sovereignty and independence for the former Italian colonies under the protection of the "future system of world security." In the case of southern Africa, the point was deemed to support the earlier ANC stand against any transfer of High Commission Territories to the Union. Point two of the Charter involved "no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned." This principle the ANC accepted as the right to self-determination, not only for small nations, but for Africans under European tutelage as in South Africa, where there existed "the peculiar circumstances of a politically entrenched European minority ruling a majority non-European population." In contrast to the normal European colonial situation and the need for self-government and sovereign rights

⁵¹African Claims in South Africa, Congress Series No. 11

in an independent state, ANC demanded full citizenship rights and direct participation in all affairs of state.

Under the remaining six points, the document insisted on economic development for the benefit of all peoples in the state concerned, improved labor conditions, training facilities, social security, adequate housing for all races and the removal of the color bar. In the case of land there was an insistence not only for African access to its ownership and use in urban areas, but a demand for fair distribution of the land as a pre-requisite for purchase, sale and leasing. The central issues under "Industry and Labor" involved eradication of the legislation and de facto color bars in every walk of life: adequate housing, equal pay for equal work, a minimum wage for the unskilled, insurance schemes, and recognition for the African trade unions under the Industrial Conciliation Act. Education was seen as the responsibility of the state and the birthright of every individual as the means towards the full development of his talents. Free medical and health service were to be made available to all sectors of the population, and this would in turn necessitate the expansion of medical and nursing schools.⁵²

Xuma's radical reforms indicated in his "African Claims" are representative of the expanding militancy of the ANC during this period of its existence. The document reveals the wide scope of ANC demands and the way in which these became a clear-cut alternative to segregation, trusteeship and apartheid- a rejection of the very concept of a distinct Native policy. They also reveal a growing awareness within the ANC that Africans would themselves have to shoulder the onerous responsibility of developing their political influence and using it for the reform of South African society.

⁵²Roux, op. cit., p. 404

The ANC Youth League, established in 1943, was too an embodiment of the growing militancy within the ANC ranks. Edward Roux writes, "that if a particular event is to be sought for the beginnings of a conscious and organized Pan-Africanism in the ranks of the ANC it may be found in the formation of the Youth League."⁵³

The Youth League was active in Johannesburg's Orlando section and also at Fort Hare. Prominent among the members associated with the league were A.P. Mda, D. Mji, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, J. Ngubane, Robert Resha, Godfrey Pitje, and R.M. Sobukwe (many of whom became prominent actors in the formation of Umkonto). Their leader was Anton Lembede who preached what he called "the ideology of African nationalism." Nelson Mandela explains:

"There are two streams of African nationalism. One centers around Marcus Garvey's slogan 'Africa for the Africans.' It is based on the 'Quit Africa' slogan and the cry 'Hurl the white man into the sea!' This brand of nationalism is extreme and ultra-revolutionary. There is another stream of African nationalism, Africanism, which the Congress Youth League professes. We in the Youth League take into account the present situation in South Africa and realize that the different racial groups have come to stay, but we insist that a condition for inter-racial peace and progress is the abandonment of white domination and such a change in the basic structure of South African society that those relations which breed exploitation and human misery will disappear. Therefore, our goal is the winning of national freedom for the African people and the inauguration of a people's free society where racial oppression and persecution are outlawed."⁵⁴

A major historic contribution of the Youth League to African political organizations was its emphasis on the African cultural heritage and

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Mandela, op, cit., p. 20

ability for progress through community efforts (which it contrasted with the white man's individualism).⁵⁵ This was due to the emergence of a new urban intelligensia that saw the way towards viable resistance in the development of a movement with a mass base. Traditionally, ANC leaders remained remote from the people and spoke "for the people rather than to the people." This new militant generation saw power in the number of people that could be mobilized in a massive front against the state. We see these attitudes more apparent in the formation of Umkonto in 1961- the same goals, the same leaders, only almost twenty years later.

The Youth League was instrumental in the formal acceptance of "African Claims" by the ANC in 1945. However, the initial optimism that the war would lead to a reorientation of the 'Native Policy' had been dissipated by a series of government policy decisions. Late in 1942 industrial unrest and a series of African strikes in Natal coalfields and the Witwatersrand led to an emergency proclamation, War Measure No. 145. This prohibited African workers from striking, imposed criminal sanctions up to three years imprisonment and/or a fine of 500 pounds, and provided compulsory arbitration of disputes by a civil servant from the Department of Labor. In the same year the Pretoria City Council failed to implement a wage board decision in favor of a minimum wage for African employees.

The restrictions placed on African workers during World War II were not so much a cause of the war itself that a mere continuation of the government's policy to supply industry with an inexhaustible pool of cheap labor. A national system of government labor bureaus had been set up to implement movement controls, to register African workers, to send them wherever their labor is needed and to enforce the vagrancy laws. All

⁵⁵ D.A. Kotze, African Politics in South Africa, 1964-1974 (London: C. Hurst, 1975) p. 9

unemployed African males over age 15 had to report to a labor bureau, and employers in general would hire only from one of these bureaus. Africans failing to report to a labor bureau would be arrested without warrant and removed from any area. Africans may not take employment from anywhere but a bureau but a bureau may refuse to permit the continued employment of an African worker. It may also cancel existing contracts of employment. If an African refuses to accept a job offered to him, he may be dealt with as an "idle" or "undesirable" person. The labor system is thus run on the principle that Africans must do as they are told or suffer the consequences.

Legislation against African workers provided these certain restrictions:

- (1) African trade unions are barred from legal recognition and legal rights.
- (2) Strikes by African workers were illegal, punishable by a fine up to \$1,400.00 or three years in prison.
- (3) Breaches of contract by African workers are a criminal offense.
- (4) African workers are prohibited from membership in registered trade unions.
- (5) African workers are excluded from the negotiation of industrial agreements which may be applicable to them.⁵⁶

There are other indirect ways the government exploits the labor of African workers. The rights of Africans to move to "white areas", and to stay in them, are restricted and closely controlled, notably by the Bantu (Urban areas) Act of 1945, as amended, and by the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964. These measures state that no African may be in an urban area for more than seventy-two hours without certain special qualifications or a job. Nor may he enter an urban area without already having obtained a contract of employment from a government labor bureau. Africans residing

⁵⁶International Labor Office, Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labor. (1953) p. 404

in "white areas" must apply for permits to continue staying in them, and such permits may be refused in the event of a surplus of African labor in any given area. Africans in the "white areas" who are unemployed, who have left their jobs illegally, or who have been refused permission to remain in them may be classified as "idle" or "undesirable" persons. Such persons may be arrested without warrant and sent to a work colony for up to three years. Furthermore, African workers in prison may be hired out to white employers. In some areas, especially in food-producing areas where labor is in short supply, white farmers are permitted to form their own associations to build prison farms. They then use convict labor to work these farms.⁵⁷ Since World War II, this elaborate system of forced labor has merely become more efficient.

Hostilities in Europe had given a major boost to the South African economy, but with rapid urbanization, widespread slum areas and increased lawlessness in grossly overcrowded locations, Police raids on Africans increased 100%. By 1944 the earlier relaxation of pass laws had been abandoned, giving rise to a further increase in police activity. In 1945, with the passage of the Natives (Urban areas) Consolidation Act, controls of Africans tightened up in an attempt to check the urban influx.

By 1946 Xuma was cooperating with the Indian Congress at a time when the latter was involved in passive resistance against the perpetuation of the Asiatic Land Tenure Act. He also persisted in his attempts to gather mass support by opposing the pass laws. Although Xuma continued to appeal to international figures of authority such as the United States government and Smuts himself, the ANC was forced to face up to a fact of which it had

⁵⁷Walshe, op. cit., p. 425

been uneasily aware of since 1936. Freedom was not going to be given to the Africans by anyone but themselves. Gradually, eventually and painfully, the ANC moved towards a policy of non-cooperation, passive resistance and civil disobedience in a belated and desperate effort to check the retention and then the enforcement of the whole pattern of segregation against which it had protested since its inception in 1913.

The Nationalist Party victory of 1948, and its ensuing policy of "apartheid", was a milestone in the development of a more militant political consciousness within the ranks of the ANC. The ANC responded to the results of the election by asserting its own contrasting ideals with greater vehemence. It also moved under increasing pressure from its more radical groups towards new methods of protest. The ANC National Executive Committee and the NRC caucus met in Bloemfontein after the general election and issued simultaneous statements condemning apartheid as a mere continuation of the long-established policy of segregation and exploitation of African labor which would inevitably lead to racial strife. Two months later, in October 1948, a meeting of twelve African leaders was called by Xuma in an attempt to end the division between ANC and The All-African Convention. The result was a statement lamenting the marked deterioration in the prospects open to Africans and condemning the callous disregard of the fundamental rights of Africans by the government largely with the acquiescence of the European population. This, in turn, had undermined any confidence Africans might have had in the justice of white men. The gathering then committed itself to greater unity and the formulation of a "Programme of Action" designed to liberate the African people.

In accepting the Programme of Action, the ANC had challenged the cautious if committed leadership of its President-General. When Xuma's third

term of office expired in 1949, he failed to secure re-election and was replaced by Dr. John S. Moroka. In essence, his removal involved a dispute over the timing of mass protests, and more immediately the boycott of elections under the 1936 Act. According to the Youth League's analysis, the very process of attempting mass action would activate latent support of the ANC and provide the opportunity to place its organization on a mass footing. The program set out to stimulate the African masses into greater political consciousness through a boycott of all differentials created especially for Africans, and by the tactical use of strikes, civil disobedience and non-cooperation. With the Programme of Action began a new era of ANC resistance philosophy- that of passive resistance.

At first this more precise formulation of long-established ideology resulted from the stimulus of war and Xuma's leadership. It was then encouraged, prior to the effects of the 1943 election, by a new willingness in high places to question the basic assumptions of past "Native policy." By middle of the 1940's these revived hopes were replaced by profound disillusionment. It was precisely at this time, however, that the full impact of the Atlantic Charter and the formation of the United Nations assured the ANC of the justice of their demands, and although there was severe reaction against the Nationalist Party victory of 1948 and the subsequent policy of apartheid, this did not move the ANC to abandon past ideals and take up counter-racialism.

The result of Smuts' intransigence and the election of 1948 was the initiation of a search for new methods of protest. Increasingly unsympathetic governments gave rise to the reluctant acceptance of non-cooperation, as in the adjournment of the NRC, and eventually to the search for

mass support in the defiance of unjust laws. The goal remained a reversal of official policy, but was now to be achieved by extra-constitutional pressures. Closely involved with these new methods was the realization, fostered by the Youth League, that the ANC was ultimately committed to the deliberate creation of a mass organization as a base for African political power, to one man one vote, a common voters roll and the eventual exercise of authority. This authority was nevertheless to be exercised within the confines of the long-established goals of non-racial justice.⁵⁸

The years 1913 to 1949 were those of marked change within the ideological and tactical framework from which the ANC operated as a movement of resistance. Strict constitutional struggle was a complete failure; each year saw more and more oppressing legislation being passed through the Parliament. A militant urban generation was coming of age, most evident in the formation of the Youth League, and began to push the movement into more exacting methods of resistance. Passive resistance became the means and a more radical change in the system, rather than participation of the African elite, became the end. The masses were being looked at more and more as a source of power. The movement was expanding and its goals were becoming clearer and more demanding against the South African government.

⁵⁸Ibid, p. 294

CHAPTER IV

THE FAILURE OF NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE AND THE EMERGENCE OF UMKONTO

Xuma was defeated in 1949 by Dr. John S. Moroka, another distinguished medical doctor. The Youth League had voted for Moroka with misgivings, which, as it happened, proved to be well-founded. Under Moroka, the Programme of Action remained a paper program; few of its provisions were even partly implemented. The only actions was that militant campaigns, the basis for which had been laid by Xuma, were mounted. The first of these was the Defiance Campaign of 1952 in which members of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress were to defy unjust laws and were to accept prison sentences, refusing fines or bail.⁵⁹ It was during this time period that Chief Albert John Luthuli appeared on the scene.

Albert John Luthuli, son of a Zulu chief, was born in Natal in 1898 (?). He was educated at the Methodist Institute in Edendale and studied teaching along with the ministry. Luthuli was elected Chief of the Umvonti Mission Reserve in Natal in 1936. Before joining the ANC, Luthuli was involved with organizing African teachers during the twenties and African cane growers in the forties. When Luthuli joined the ANC is somewhat unclear, yet Luthuli's conception of the objectives of the ANC is quite clear:

"The business of Congress is not deliberation and legislation. Its business is to right the total exclusion of the Africans from the management of South Africa, to give direction to the forces of liberation, to harness peacefully the growing resistance to continued oppression, and by various non-violent means, to demand the redress of justice.⁶⁰

Luthuli was an idealist; a man of God who believed that protest by peace-

⁵⁹Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, op. cit., p. 19

⁶⁰Albert Luthuli, Let My People Go (New York:McGraw Hill, 1962) p. 90

ful means would achieve freedom for the African people. His campaigns in the ANC consisted of demonstrations, boycotts, protests and alliances with other groups. Luthuli believed, like many black Americans in the 1950's, that the vote was the first important tool in full participation:

"There was no longer any doubt in my mind that without the vote we are helpless. Without the vote there is no way for us to realize ourselves in our own lands, or even be heard. Without the vote our future would be decreed by a minority of whites, as our past has been."⁶¹

In 1952, Luthuli became the leading figure in the Defiance Campaign—a role that would eventually lead him to the presidency of the ANC. However, it must be noted that the actual dynamics of Luthuli's active role as a leader within the ranks of the ANC were somewhat doubtful. Luthuli brought to the ANC a high moral sense, an impressive personality of great strength, and considerable political naivete. He was respected; his name was used; but he was taken very little into the Councils of the men who actually made ANC policy decisions.⁶² Feit notes that in both Luthuli's speeches and writings and the evidence of witnesses in trials against him bear out that he was only sketchily informed on what was going on, and then only after the crucial decisions had been made. Too, Luthuli spent his entire time as president-general of the ANC under government ban, which forbid him to take part in any public endeavors associated with politics. It must also be taken into consideration that idealists such as Luthuli—particularly humanistic idealists—do not make good revolutionary leaders. Their moral scruples always get in the way of action.

Heralded by a day of prayer in many locations throughout the country, the Defiance Campaign was launched on June 26, 1952. Its objectives were

⁶¹—
⁶²Ibid, p. 109

⁶²Feit, op. cit., p. 18 (See footnote #59)

outlined in a statement made in "Pioneer:Official Organ of the ANCYL":

"The fundamental principles of the Program of Action of the African National Congress are inspired by the desire to achieve National Freedom. By National freedom we mean freedom from white domination, and the attainment of political independence. This implies the rejection of the conception of segregation, apartheid, trusteeship, or white leadership which are all in one way or another motivated by the idea of white domination or domination of Whites over Blacks. Like all other people, the African people claim the right of self-determination."⁶³

The Program demanded direct representation in all bodies of the state, the creation of a national fund to finance the struggle, the political education of Africans, and the use of the strike and the boycott as weapons in the struggle. The Defiance Campaign was a manifestation of the ANC's increasing militancy during this era of civil disobedience, strike and boycott. The Programme of Action outlined the basic strategies to be employed by the movement, utilizing the power of the people. The Defiance Campaign was preceded by a May Day protest in 1950 in which some eighteen people were killed and many more wounded during clashes with the police. The decision to undertake the massive Defiance Campaign was, as it seems, made as an aftermath of this tragedy. The campaign was launched with a formal letter to the then Prime Minister of South Africa, Daniel Francois Malan, demanding the repeal of certain specific laws by February 29, 1952, as otherwise a passive resistance campaign would be mounted. In his reply, Dr. Malan rebuked the writers for addressing him instead of the Minister of Native Affairs and indicated that the government had no intention of repealing the laws differentiating between "European" and "Bantu." Any attempt on the part of the ANC and its allies to compel a change would be met with the full force of the law.⁶⁴

⁶³Ibid, p. 19

⁶⁴Ibid, pp. 21-22

In response to this letter, and indeed no other reaction from Malan had seriously been expected, the ANC launched the campaign in which African and Indian volunteers, reportedly trained in techniques of non-violence, broke apartheid legislation. These acts, in general, took one or the other following forms:

- Entering a location without a permit.
- Being out at night without a curfew pass.
- Sitting on railway seats marked "European Only."
- Entering the European waiting room on railway stations.
- Travelling in railway coaches reserved for Europeans.
- Entering the European section of the Post Office.

In other words, the only law directly challenged was the Pass Law, symbol of domination for the whites and subjection for the African.⁶⁵

What mattered was not the nature of the laws broken, but rather that laws were broken. They were broken in the belief that, if courts and prisons were clogged with numberless petty offenders who refused bail or fine, the machinery of repressive legislation would break down through sheer overload. For a time, this seemed a promising method. The prisons were filling up and the courts overflowing as some 8,500 volunteers began breaking laws. But the Campaign was a victim of its own success. Courts began to apply existing laws more strictly, exacting the maximum penalties. Stiffer sentences and the arrests of the leaders under laws for the suppression of communism took the impetus out of the campaign which began losing momentum.

Early in 1953 the government introduced the Public Safety Act enabling it to declare a state of emergency and then to issue emergency regulations, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act which laid down severe penalties for those convicted of offenses committed by way of protest against any law. In the face of such opposition, the organizers of the campaign then decided that it would be best to bring it to an honorable

⁶⁵ Leo Kuper, Passive Resistance in South Africa (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) p. 122

end- that is, before it fizzled out. They also felt that it would be unwise to arrange further demonstrations at a time of tension, and unfair to expose volunteers to the severe new penalties. The ANC issued an appeal to the African people to avoid violence at any cost. During this period, namely in October and November of 1952, there was serious rioting in Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and in East London, in each case being sparked off by minor events.

As a store of unused energy remained from the Defiance Campaign, which would dissipate unless harnessed, the question arose as how best to put it to use. One way was to channel it into a "Congress of the People," which was not a new movement but a vast gathering of delegates drawn from among all the people in South Africa. It would be convened to draw up a new covenant, a "Freedom Charter" incorporating all the changes they wished to see in South Africa. The COP, as it was called, was to be truly national. And to increase the impression of nationalism, organizations of all racial groups and political complexions were invited to participate. These included the ANC, the SAIC, the COP, and the Congress of Democrats, a white Marxist-oriented organization.

At the conference, the Freedom Charter was drawn up and was accepted clause by clause by acclamation of the 2,000 to 3,000 delegates attending. The Charter most notably called for a complete transformation of South African society.⁶⁶ Although the reforms listed appear to be somewhat socialistic, Nelson Mandela denies the Charter as being "a blueprint for a socialist state."⁶⁷ Instead, he cites the Charter as merely "a program for the unification of various classes and groupings amongst the people on a democratic basis." Mandela maintains that under socialism the workers

⁶⁶Feit, op. cit., p. 23

⁶⁷Mandela, op. cit., p. 57

hold state power. They and the peasants own the means of production, the lands, the factories and the mills. All production is for use and not profit. The Charter, according to Mandela, does not contemplate such profound economic and political changes. Its declaration, "The people shall govern!" visualizes the transfer of power not to any single social class but to all the people of South Africa, be they workers, peasants, professional men or petty bourgeoisie.⁶⁸

The Freedom Charter was the first policy document to set up objectives for a non-racial democratic South Africa. It was not a socialist program for it did not envisage the transfer of power to any social class, but it recognized that without basic changes there could be no over-all improvement in the conditions of the people and no democratic system of government.

The South African scene had changed in the meantime. The first Nationalist Prime Minister, D.F. Malan, retired in 1954. He was succeeded by J.G. Strydom, nicknamed the "Lion of the North" because he was considered the fearless spokesman for the Nationalists in the Transvaal. It was Strydom's outspoken objective to maintain "die Baaskap van die Wit man" (the mastery of the white) and to this end he began to tighten up and improve the machinery of legislation of apartheid.

Faced with an even sterner opponent than Malan, the ANC and its allies planned a "Resist-Apartheid Campaign.": The aim of the new campaigns were to resist each new apartheid measure as it was promulgated. The ANC singled out the Western Areas resettlement scheme and the Bantu Education Act as targets for its attempts at mass mobilization and as its focal points in the resistance to apartheid. Although the broad objectives

⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 57-58

of the campaigns were published far and wide, the ANC apparently had no clear-cut tactical plans for achieving its objectives. People were merely told to resist, not how to resist. Furthermore, successful resistance depended on voluntary, sustained mass participation- which was not forthcoming. The failure of the ANC in the Western Areas campaign⁶⁹ also followed a misjudgement of the feelings of the people concerned. The greater majority were eager to leave the overcrowded slum areas. The resistance to Bantu Education was of greater importance, since it was to be a national protest, in the form of a boycott of government-controlled schools during 1955. The national executive decided, in the face of a government warning that children who boycotted school would not be admitted, to postpone the school boycott and boycott the school boards. At this stage the national executive lost control of the campaign and rebellious branches induced people again to proceed with the boycott of schools. The task was entrusted to the Youth League, but again no proper plans were available as to how the boycott should be carried out and sustained. ANC plans for alternative educational facilities did not materialize and the campaign collapsed, seriously damaging the prestige of the ANC.

The effects of these failures were disastrous for the ANC. Protests were mounted in rapid succession as the government speeded up the process of apartheid. There was no time for adequate preparation. Promises of alternatives to government services to be boycotted could not be kept. The ANC did not, even at the best of times, have the resources to replace government services, and, with one law following another, was even less in a position to mobilize the means. The failure of these campaigns did little to add luster to the ANC, and pointed out its powerlessness.

⁶⁹ Edward Feit gives a detailed analysis of this campaign in African Opposition in South Africa, pp. 92-143

During 1956-1960 the pass laws were considerably tightened, and the government took power to serve banishment orders without prior notice to Africans in rural areas. The Minister of Bantu Administration and Development was empowered, subject to certain conditions, to control the presence of Africans at church services, schools, hospitals, clubs and places of entertainment in urban areas outside African townships. Apartheid was insisted upon in welfare organizations and some professional bodies.

The government began building separate university colleges for Africans, Coloured and Asian students. The rates of African taxation were raised; and for the first time African women whose incomes exceeded 300 Rand per year were subject to taxation. The cost of living was rising more rapidly than African wages. New urban housing schemes were on an "economic" basis: the Africans had, over a period of years, to repay the capital costs and interest. Many new group area proclamations were gazetted.⁷⁰

During December of 1956 the police arrested 156 persons on the charge of high treason, many of them leaders of organizations in the Congress Alliance. The trial lasted for four years and centered around charges of the ANC and its allies attempting to overthrow the government by violence, and the establishment of a Communist state. These charges were based on the Congress Alliance and the subsequent campaigns. The trial began on December 19, 1956 and dragged on, as the Prosecution and Defense ploughed through mountains of evidence that itself constituted the most complete documentary record of the long history of the ANC. When the trial finally ground to a halt on March 29, 1961, the accused were found not guilty and discharged. The government could not prove either that these leaders were communists nor had any intention of overthrowing the South African government

⁷⁰ Feit, op. cit., p. 43

by violence. What the trial did accomplish, however, was a strengthening of the bonds between the ANC and its allies which gave greater insight to the struggle ahead. However, this unity was born only between the ANC as a whole and the other members of the Congress Alliance. Within the ranks of the ANC was disunity that could not be reconciled.

To understand the causes for the split in the ANC which eventually formed itself into the Pan-Africanist Congress, the concept of "nationalism" must be understood in its expanded forms. Feit explains African nationalism as that "amalgam of imported ideas, notions, and conceptions."⁷¹ He contends further that there are three streams of thought entering into this nationalism that are of particular importance: political liberalism, Bible fundamentalism, and Marxism. Political liberalism was brought by the Christian missionaries, often the first teachers African knew. Its tone was that of the nineteenth century, and its emphasis was on "one man, one vote." It was also from the missionaries that Africans learned their biblical texts, which they took both seriously and literally. Marxism, being both "scientific" and "mesannic" bridged the other two streams of thought and influenced communists and non-communists alike. But Marxism induced a reaction; younger leaders came to believe that the older leaders were too much under its spell and were therefore subject to undue influence of white and Indian communists. The absorption of these members with multi-racialism and the class struggle blinded them, so thought the younger members, to the more important matter of African nationalism. The betrayal of African nationalism was, according to this analysis, sealed with the adoption of the Freedom Charter. Adoption of the Charter committed the ANC to a multi-racial "peoples' republic" instead of to a South Africa

⁷¹Ibid, p. 28

resting on Black African majority rule. Africans, the majority, were going to have to share control with alien minorities.⁷²

The ranks were divided into the Charterists (referring to the Freedom Charter) and the Africanists. The actual split had its immediate cause in the failure of the 1958 'stay-at-home' strike. The Congress Alliance had determined upon a one-day work stoppage on the day of the all-white parliamentary elections. This proposal was initially rejected by the ANC, but was forced through by the Europeans and Indians in the Alliance. When the strike, which had been opposed by the majority of the provincial divisions of the ANC, had failed, the vexed alliance leaders demanded disciplinary action against the Africanists who had actively opposed it. The Africanists held a meeting and sent a final message to the Charterists, who were now in control of the Congress. They declared: "We are launching out on our own as the custodian of ANC policy as formulated in 1912 and pursued up until the time of the Congress Alliance."⁷³ Thus, due to the ANC's stand on creating a non-racial classless society, the Pan-Africanists split to struggle for liberation in their own way towards their own goals. Yet, we shall see the gap between the ANC and the PAC become narrower in subsequent developments beginning with the campaign against the pass laws in 1960.

Opposition to passes had a long history. Indeed, one of the earliest ANC campaigns was precisely on this issue. When the pass laws were introduced in 1911, the leaders of the ANC, not yet then welded together into one organization, led a campaign against the new system. More campaigns were mounted subsequently, one in 1919 and another in 1925, a test case which prevented the extension of passes to women at that time. A

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 55

new anti-pass movement was initiated by the ANC in 1944, and sporadic protests continued throughout the postwar period. In 1960, the government again tried to extend the pass laws to women, and both the ANC and the PAC responded to the call.

At its 47th annual conference in December 1959, resolutions were adopted for a major campaign against passes in 1960. A few days later the PAC held its annual conference and adopted resolutions for a campaign against passes to be coupled with a campaign for greater courtesy toward and higher wages for Africans.

Both organizations, it seems, came forward with the same idea at much the same time. Each organization, however, had different ideas on how the campaign was to be carried out. The ANC went about things in its regular cautious and cumbersome way. There were to be three phases to the campaign: 1) an "anti-Pass" Day on March 31, 1960, followed by 2) and "African Freedom" Day on April 15 to coincide with, and be directed against, the white celebrations commemorating the foundation of the Union of South Africa, and 3) "A National Day of Mourning" on June 26 accompanied by a stay-at-home strike, on which day no African was to go to work. The PAC planned something completely different. It decided on a mass campaign in which Africans would simply leave their reference books at home (while not destroying them) and would present themselves at police stations asking to be arrested. The slogan of the campaign was to be: "No bail! No defense! No fine!" By coming in great numbers demanding arrest, opting for imprisonment, and accepting sentences, Africans could make the entire operation of the pass system unworkable. All this was reminiscent of the old Defiance Campaign, but this time it was not picked volunteers of all races

who were doing the defying, but Africans alone and en masse.

As the time of the campaign approached, PAC leaders began getting more cautious. Faced with the uncertainties of its first major campaign, PAC began casting around for allies. "All South Africans, whether ethnically African or not, were now called upon to join in what the PAC leadership called 'this nobel campaign'."⁷⁴ Similar caution was shown in the matter of violence. The PAC stressed its opposition to violence, just as the ANC had done. The only thing different about this campaign from the ANC campaign was that the ANC refused to join ranks. To have entered into a campaign at the behest of its rivals would have been tantamount to an abdication of the political leadership of Africans which the ANC planned. Nonetheless, the first stage of the campaign was to be enacted out at Sharpeville.

On March 21, 1960 a crowd of Black South Africans estimated at between five and seven thousand people formed a procession of about three-quarters of a mile long, and headed towards the municipal office at Sharpeville in defiance of the pass laws. The police charged at the crowd, threw tear-gas bombs, and started making arrests. This increased the tension and when the crowds started throwing stones, the police responded with bullets. On March 22, it was announced that 69 Africans were killed and 186 wounded.

Luthuli called for "a Day of Mourning" and a stay-at-home strike, both well-supported and almost complete. Those who did not participate found trouble awaiting them in the townships. Riots broke out in the country from Cape Town to Durban, and the country was soon thrown into a "State of Emergency." On March 30 the "State of Emergency" was made official

⁷⁴Feit, op. cit., p. 40

and in a nationwide sweep, 98 whites, 36 Coloureds, 90 Asians and 11,279 Africans were taken into detention. The arrested included most of the better-known ANC leaders, the leaders of the various congresses allied with the ANC, as well as militant opponents outside these groups. These arrests served to deprive the ANC and its allies of effective leadership and assured that order was maintained on April 10, when the pass laws were again to be enforced. The ANC and the PAC were declared illegal, and it became a serious offense to carry on its activities or advocate its aims.⁷⁵

Sharpeville precipitated the end of the era of non-violence. Violent struggle was to become the only means of achieving freedom for the African people. The ANC was banned and entered a period of illegal existence. For all practical purposes, the ANC was merely the last threads of the previous movement. In its place arose a new and more revolutionary organization which relied on violence as a tactic of struggle- the only tactic which the white South African can hear. This organization was to be known as Umkonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), and it is here, rather than with the vaguely defined ranks of the ANC-proper, that this analysis shall follow during the years 1960-1963.

The year 1960 represented the coming of age of the African National Congress. Umkonto was born through the dying moans of the 69 Africans murdered at Sharpeville. Nelson Mandela, father of the illegitimate movement, had been through a long courtship with the ANC since his early leadership in the Youth League. Mandela, son of a Tembu chief, was born in the Transkei, attended Fort Hare University, and began practicing law in Johannesburg with his longtime friend and fellow freedom fighter

⁷⁵Walshe, op. cit., pp. 13-14

Oliver Tambo. Mandela is described as "passionate, emotional, sensitive, quickly stung to bitterness and retaliation by patronage and insult."⁷⁶ Mandela was an instrumental figure in the founding of the Youth League, an organization of "a new generation turned to political action, infected by discontent with an outspoken and vigorous nationalism."⁷⁷ The Youth League openly attacked past policies of the conservative ANC and the leadership of vacillation and compromise. The militant ideas of the Youth League were forerunners of the ultimate formation of Umkonto.

After the government placed a ban on the ANC, a caretaker committee had been formed to re-organize the ANC into an underground movement. An ad hoc committee of African leaders, among them Paul Mosaka, Duma Nokwe, Govan Mbeki, J. Ngubane, and Nelson Mandela summoned an All-In African Conference in Pietersmartizburg for March, 1961.

White South Africa was preparing to referendum to declare itself a Nationalist Republic. The freedom struggle urged that there was one last opportunity to prevent race disaster. There should be convened a full representative gathering- representative of all races- a new national convention to draft a new democratic constitution.

The demand for the holding of a national convention to draft a non-color bar constitution was the claim of the disfranchised, the overwhelming majority of South Africans, that the vote be extended to them. The stay-at-home strike following the conference was a dramatic action to drive the demand home. The government answered the strike call with the country's biggest mobilization since the war. Civil liberties were suspended. South Africa was again in a state of emergency. On June 26, 1961 Nelson Mandela went into hiding.

⁷⁶Quoted from Oliver Tambo in Mandela, op. cit., p. xi

⁷⁷Quoted from Ruth First in Mandela, op. cit., p. 18

Mandela's decision to remain underground to prepare new fighting forces was indicative of a new mood sweeping the African people. The government mobilization to smash the strike had been a turning point in the country. Africans decided that the violence of the state made peaceful protest futile. In December, 1961, the first acts of sabotage announced the formation of Umkonto.⁷⁸

Umkonto did not achieve its final form all at once, but passed through a series of developmental phases. Those who came together at the beginning, in mid-June 1961, joined a nameless organization. Groups of African, whites, and Indians, most of whom were members either of one of the Congress Alliance organizations or of the South African Communist Party, were assembled in different centers. Their only qualification at that stage was the willingness to undertake acts of sabotage.⁷⁹

Although Umkonto began in seemingly unplanned fashion, attempts to mold it in the format of a modified M-Plan were soon made. The aims of the re-organization were to: 1) consolidate the movement's machinery; 2) enable the transmission of the important decisions taken on a national level to every member of the organization without calling public meetings, issuing press statements, and printing circulars; 3) to build up in the local branches themselves local factions which would eventually represent the strength and will of the people; and 4) extend and strengthen the ties between the organization and the people. Referring to this last aim, Mandela writes:

"From now on the activities of Congressites must not be confined to speeches and resolutions. Their activities must find their expression in wide-scale work among the

⁷⁸Mandela, op. cit., p. 27

⁷⁹Feit, op. cit., p. 169

masses, work which will enable them to make the greatest possible contacts with the working people."⁸⁰

He attests this new relationship of the leaders to the masses to the generally raised political level of the people and their consciousness of their strength. Mandela realized that in a country such as South Africa a political organization that did not receive the support of the workers is in fact paralyzed on the very ground on which it has chosed to wage battle. Thus, we see in Umkonto; 1) an organization which grew out of an association of the two oldest organizations which had consistently opposed white supremacy- the ANC and the South African Communist Party; 2) a better financed organization, better organized and more ambitious than any of its rivals; and, 3) a mass based organization which turned to violence only when, for forty-seven years, all else failed.

Early in 1962 Mandela made a surprise appearance as the leader of the ANC delegation to the Addis Abbaba Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa. He had left South Africa temporarily to convey personally news to Africa of the crisis developing at home and the decision to embark upon violent means of struggle. In his speech to the conference, Mandela attempts to justify Umkonto's turn to violence:

"During the last ten years the African people of South Africa have fought many freedom battles involving civil disobedience, strikes, protests marches, boycotts and demonstrations of all kinds. In all these campaigns we repeatedly stressed the importance of disciplined, peaceful and non-violent struggle. We did so firstly because we felt that there were still opportunities for peaceful struggle

⁸⁰Mandela, op. cit., p. 28

and we sincerely worked for peaceful changes. Secondly, we did not want to expose our people to situations where they might become targets for the trigger-happy South African police. But the situation has now radically altered. South Africa is now a land ruled by the gun."⁸¹

Special emphasis was given to the stay-at-home strike of June 26 as a case in point. Mandela states that the strike, in accordance with ANC policy, was to be a peaceful demonstration. Careful instructions were given to organizers and members to avoid any recourse to violence. The government's answer was to introduce new and harsher laws to mobilize its armed forces, and to send armed vehicles and soldiers into the townships in a massive show of force intended to intimidate the people. This was an indication that the government had decided to rule by force alone, and this decision was a milestone on the road to Umkonto.

On October 22, 1962 Mandela was tried in Pretoria for inciting workers to strike (May stay-at-home) and for leaving South Africa without a valid travel document (Addis Conference). He was sentenced to three years imprisonment on the first charge and two years on the second.

Meanwhile, Umkonto was waging a front-line battle using the act of sabotage as a means of struggle. Mandela had considered the four possible means of violence: sabotage, guerilla warfare, terrorism and open revolution. Sabotage was chosen because of two reasons: Firstly, sabotage did not involve loss of life and, according to Mandela, offered the best hope for future race relations. Secondly, Umkonto recognized that South Africa depended to a large extent on foreign capital and on foreign trade. They felt that planned destruction of power plants, and interference with railway and telephone communications would tend to scare capital away from

⁸¹Ibid, p.19

the country, would make it more difficult for goods from the industrial areas to reach the seaports on schedule, and would in the long run be an economic burden on the country, thus compelling the voters to reconsider their position. Attacks on the economic structure of the country were to be linked with government buildings and other symbols of the apartheid state.⁸² Feit has recorded 193 acts of sabotage committed by Umkonto members.⁸³

On June 11, 1963 the police raided the underground headquarters in Rivonia, a Johannesburg suburb, and arrested Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathreda, Dennis Goldberg, Lionel Bernstein and others. The Rivoni Trial began October, 1963, and Mandela was taken from his cell to join those facing trial for sabotage and a conspiracy to overthrow the government by revolution and by assisting an armed invasion by foreign troops.⁸⁴

Mandela opened the defense, and in his statement to court on April 20, 1964, he admitted that he had been one of the founders of Umkonto:

"I have already mentioned that I was one of the persons who helped to form Umkonto. I, and the others who started the organization, did so for two reasons. Firstly, we believe that as a result of government policy, violence by the African people had become inevitable. All lawful models of expressing opposition to this principle of white supremacy had been closed by legislation, and we were placed in a position in which we either had to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or to defy the government. We chose to defy the law. We first broke the law in a way which avoided any recourse of violence; when this form was legislated against and then the government resorted to a show of force to crush opposition to its policies, only then did we decide to answer violence with violence."⁸⁵

⁸²Ibid, pp. 164-174

⁸³Feit, op. cit., pp. 325-345

⁸⁴Mandela, op. cit., p. 160

⁸⁵Ibid, p. 164

Violence became and is the South African's only means of achieving liberation.

Ruth First writes:

"The Rivonia Trial marked the abandonment of the African struggle of any illusions, constitutional or otherwise, about the nature of the combat. The non-violent phase of the liberation struggle was over; the period of underground resistance had begun. The trial and the wave of oppression that accompanied and followed it were intended to incapacitate the leadership that had grown from the years of mass action and that was capable of taking the struggle in new, dangerous, and exacting directions."⁸⁶

Thus, we have seen the evolution of ideology and tactics throughout the history of the African National Congress of South Africa- an evolution that was marked by the fact that greater militancy was adopted during each stage only as a result of the government's response to non-violence with violence. Discussion and negotiation about the South African situation will continue indefinitely as to the ways and means by which South Africa will transform the government into one of majority rule. The discussion is futile, however, because history has taught the South African that the only words that the Afrikaaner will listen to are those spoken at the end of a gun. The struggle will not be easy; the resistance in South Africa which will be taken today must not only fight against the predatory settler colonialism that has alienated the peasant from his land and coerced him into contract labor in mines and on plantations, but also against the massive state apparatus of a modern industrial economy and all the weapons within which a state such as this has to defend itself.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the sooner a protracted struggle is to erupt, the sooner the South African can begin to devise a society based on justice, equality and what he perceives to be the African way of life.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. v

⁸⁷ Ibid

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The African National Congress of South Africa began in 1913 as a movement to unite the various tribal groupings in South Africa and to provide the African people with a representative body to deal with the increasingly oppressive legislation being passed through the white South African Parliament. It is essentially an elite-led, reformist organization which sought African participation in the political, social, and economic spheres of South African society. The struggle was seen as a constitutional one which would be fought with the aid of white liberals. Protest was first aimed at the British government in hopes that Great Britain would enforce the law demanding equal rights for all subjects of the Crown regardless of national origin. The British refused to address the question regarding African rights and continued to support the white South African regime. Protest then switched to the South African government itself, yet with even more disastrous results than the ANC's dealing with England. More and more restrictions were placed on the African people, and more and more land and resources were being surrendered to South Africa's expanding economy. African labor was valued as the most important commodity in the economy, and the government employed any and all means by which to buy this labor at the cheapest price and control its movements into the most advantageous positions for capitalistic interests. The African National Congress fought a constitutional battle for thirty-six years, and with the passage of the Hertzog Bills, the futility of the struggle was made irrevocably clear. Other means of resistance were to be devised.

By 1940 it became clear to the ANC that a mass base would be needed to carry on further resistance and efforts were channeled into mobilizing the vast number of Africans into a viable source of power to fight against the white South African's massive state apparatus. Resistance was to take the form of boycotts, strikes, and civil disobedience within a non-violent framework. From 1949 to 1952, a huge Defiance Campaign was carried out to protest the infamous apartheid laws. This resulted in increasing restrictions placed on the African people and outrageous punishments inflicted upon any person opposing the policies of the apartheid state. The stay-at-home strike sought to cause economic suffering in the white community while protecting the African protestor from the bodily harm used to curtail resistance by the South African police. The government responded to each peaceful, non-violent form of resistance with violence. Mass mobilization of the state's massive military apparatus was used without restraint to intimidate and, at times, to massacre the African protester. Again and again the government responded to non-violent action with violent counteraction. As the passing of the Hertzog Bills represented the end of the constitutional struggle, the incident at Sharpeville represented the end of the non-violent struggle. It became clear that the white South Africans would not hand over their power and privileges as a result of appealing to their sense of justice. Justice was to be found only at the end of a gun. A new phase in the South African struggle had begun- a struggle that had learned the lessons that history had taught.

The study of the African National Congress is a study of change. From a non-violent struggle to a violent one and from a movement advocating mere participation within the existing system to one recognizing the need for a radical redistribution of power and wealth, the African National Congress liberated itself from the constraints imposed upon a bourgeois organization by its very nature. Leadership passed from the hands of the

"Europeanized" African elite who professed the desire for participation of the so-called "civilized" African within the white power structure to a new more militant urban generation which realized that liberation would be complete only when the masses of Africans received a fair share of the country's wealth. Marxism replaced Christianity as the blueprint for proposed change, as can be seen by the ANC's stronger alliance with the South African Communist Party and the new leadership's familiarity with Marxist ideology. South Africa has been described as a powder-keg that will explode at any moment. It is in the hands of the new African leadership to pick up the debris and mold it into an African society where the power contained within the country's immense wealth rests in the hands of those who use their labor to create this wealth.

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